

Vol. CXCVIII No. 5159

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## Charivaria

"GERMANY now masses her troops on the Rumanian Frontier," a news correspondent writes. At least she treats all her neighbours alike.

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"At the first sign of a cold in the head take a mixture of quinine and castor oil," says a writer. A much pleasanter form of treatment is just to have the cold in the head.

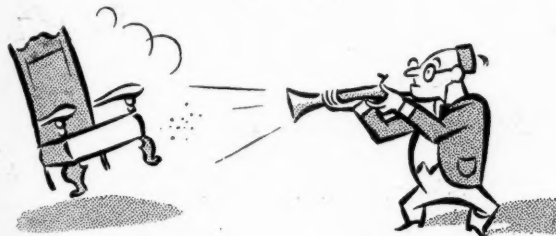
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"DRINK HOURS APPEAL TO GOVERNMENT"

Heading in Scottish Paper.

But some people wish they were longer.

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We read that antique furniture will command high prices after peace has been declared. The chief reason of course is that the war is restricting production.

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Herr HITLER is reported as saying that after the war he plans to build the biggest sports stadium in the world. This is only because he can't think of any other place in which to build it.

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"Don't forget to save those rags and bones for the old country," says a notice. Nothing personal, of course.



Weather forecasts are still made in this country, although they are not published in the Press. The Meteorological Department recently knew what climatic changes were ahead a fortnight before members of the general public were aware how severe the weather had been.

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"Crawling on the hands and knees is excellent exercise," says a doctor. Some people call it table-tennis and some ping-pong.

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"Where is the good old-fashioned hard-swearing sergeant-major to be found to-day?" asks a Boer War veteran. In the canteen, is our guess.

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"For a vertical photograph the camera is pointed vertically downwards; the oblique photograph, which shows the ground features more or less in elevation, is obtained by pointing the camera at an angle between the vertical and horizontal."

Daily Telegraph.

Now who says the Ministry of Information never lets anything out?

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An American psychologist says that motorists are usually more intelligent than pedestrians. Opposed to him is the solid mass of the world's traffic policemen.





"You ought to be thoroughly ashamed of yourself—making a profit in war-time."

### How a Newspaper Reporter Works

**I** OFTEN think—well, no, because a newspaper reporter tries not to think at all; I sometimes think, then, that it would be nice if the public knew just how we come to write those little bits in the papers. Because they would appreciate us.

I mean, it sounds so easy. This is what you read:

The modern miss has a lot to learn from her Victorian grandmamma.

That is the opinion of Miss Piggotty, head-mistress of The Dell, Hampton, who, when she retires in July, will have completed forty years in office.

"I do not think that our modern girls compare in charm and womanliness with their grandmothers," she said to our reporter, who chatted with her at her cosy home, 4 Belvedere Villas, Hampton. "They are less womanly and have not the same charm."

But, you know, it took nearly a whole day to write that. This is what actually happened:

At nine-thirty this morning our

News Editor handed one of our reporters a jagged cutting from another newspaper and barked, "Go and see this woman. Get on! *Hurry!*"

The cutting said that after forty years a Miss Piggotty was leaving the Dale School, Hamp (there was a jag here). Our reporter turned the cutting over, but there was nothing to show what paper it was from, and he was too scared of the News Editor to ask. So, being normally astute, he decided it was Hampstead, but he would look up all the Dale Schools and Piggottys in the telephone book to make sure; and also he would ring up and warn Miss Piggotty he was coming round, although only yesterday the News Editor had roared at him, "Telephoning! Only gives 'em time to get away!"

Nearly an hour later our reporter had had his coffee sent down from the canteen (always slow in taking orders) and had connected with a Mrs.

Piggotty, who said he must mean her sister-in-law, and it was Dell, not Dale.

"If you ring up again in two hours," she said, "I'll have been round and asked if she *wants* to see you, because people don't like talking to the Press."

Biting back the obvious answer, our reporter said meekly: "I'll go round to the school myself"; to which she replied that her sister-in-law was at home to-day, and she only had one day off a month and didn't like to be disturbed before lunch.

Our reporter asked for Miss Piggotty's private address and was refused it. "The Dell School, Hampstead—I mean Hampton," he muttered doggedly as he put on his coat. Half-way down the passage he heard the News Editor's footstep and dodged down the back stairs, which meant further delay, as it landed him in a department from which there seemed no way out. But finally our reporter got to the Underground

and reached Hampstead not much after eleven, wondering why he had a dull feeling at the back of his mind that something had gone wrong.

It had begun to snow, and our reporter had used snow before as an excuse for taxis on his expense list, and besides, he had no idea where The Dell was. Nor had the taxi-driver.

"Now, look here," said the taxi-driver. "There's thousands of schools here, and all of them called different. How do I know which is The Dell?"

"Well, it might be in a hollow," said our reporter.

"Hampstead's a hill," said the taxi-driver sweepingly. Our reporter wasn't listening, because the dull feeling had now crystallised into an appalling certainty. "Drive me to a telephone-box," he said.

The taxi-driver pointed out the box behind him, and our reporter went in and looked up Mrs. Piggotty's number. Yes, he'd known all along. Obviously his subconscious self had boggled at going all the way to Hampton and had made him forget.

Our reporter gave the taxi-driver a shilling for waiting and trudged back down the Underground; and some of the way to Hampton he spent wondering how to spread about half-a-crown extra over his expense list. Then he wrote out the headings for the interview. "Modern Girl v. Ancient. Horse-buses or other quaintery? Needlework now carptray? Our expences? Fmous ppl. Lookg bk over forty yrs. think the most sig. Etc. usual stuff."

Getting out at Hampton, our reporter found that whenever the words "Miss" and "Piggotty" came into his mind he felt a sharp pain above his ears. So he dived into a pub and had a pint of bitter and some biscuits. He felt much better as he jumped on a bus. When the conductor told him he was on a private bus and about to start on a Freemasons' outing, he got off quite calmly and engaged a very old hired Daimler. "If you haven't heard of the Dell School," he said, "drive me to a newsagent's."

At the newsagent's our reporter was stunned to hear that someone knew The Dell, and even Miss Piggotty's private address, 4 Belvedere Villas, only a few minutes away. He was so stunned that he had paid off the Daimler and walked on before he remembered he hadn't taken in whether it was Belvedere or Bellevue.

The woman in the shop said she was glad he'd come back, because now she'd realised it was more like half an hour away, and she wouldn't have liked to send him on that long walk.

"Are there any buses or taxis?" said

our reporter, holding very tightly to the cash-register so that he shouldn't scream. His brain had resolved itself into a spinning red disc, with the words "Miss" and "Piggotty," in luminous blue, forming the hub.

"Oh, no," said the woman. "No, I'm afraid you will have to walk it."

It was past one o'clock when our reporter rattled the letter-box of 4 Belvedere Villas—as nasty a set of barracks, he thought, as you could find outside a concentration camp. But he was happy. There was perhaps nothing on earth that he was less interested in than this loathsome woman and her perishing school; yet at the thought that she was only a front door away a glow irradiated his universe and his heart hammered with delight.

Our reporter was not, on the whole, surprised when the door opened to reveal a bearded man in dungarees and holding a sandwich, nor when a Great Dane bounced out and hurled him against the doorscraper. If it had been a midget with a tame giraffe he

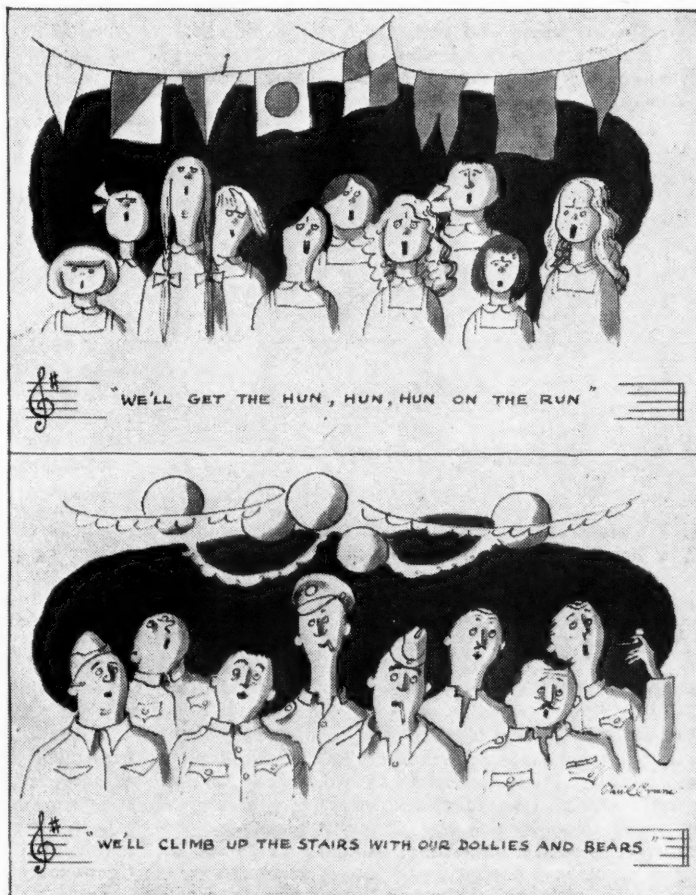
wouldn't have been surprised. But he was taken aback to learn that Miss Piggotty had gone to visit the people next door. He hadn't thought of that.

But it was quite easy for our reporter to go to No. 6, to find she had gone to lunch at her sister-in-law's, to borrow No. 6's telephone, and—standing in a dining-room full of staring children and steak-and-kidney pie, with a mon-goose trying to wrench a button off his coat—to ring her up and ask if she thought modern girls were better or worse than the girls of forty years ago.

"I really don't know," said a timid voice. "I've never thought."

"Oh, that's all right," said our reporter briskly. He had a train to catch. "I'll say something about them being not so feminine. I can, can't I? It's pretty safe. Thanks awfully. I'll jazz it up a bit. Oh, no, nothing sensational. Thanks awfully. Good-bye."

Well, you see what I mean. And it does sort of make you appreciate us reporters, doesn't it?





## Up Lines and Down

**L**IVES there an Englishman (I mean a Briton)  
Who never to his inmost heart has said,  
"If railway dividends are really smitten  
Then I as lief were dead"?

I have loved railways always in my fashion  
Since first they figured in my childhood's games,  
The sounding engines haunted me like a passion  
And I knew all their names.

Nothing has happened in the years estranging,  
Petrol nor tarmac found my soul untrue,  
I still love railways with a love not changing  
Either at York or Crewe.

Last year, I think, was Bradshaw's brave centenary.  
There was a book to give a boy to read!  
Full of the pageant of his country's scenery,  
Market and forge and mead.

Came the Great War and railways met the crisis:  
Came the Great Peace and tricked them like a clown,  
The thundering lorries undercut their prices,  
The coaches did them down.

Then I would stand and weep for hours at sidings;  
To porter after porter I would say,  
"How is your rolling stock? Of wheels what tidings?  
What of the permanent way?"

Came the New War. From imminent prostration  
The railways rose beneath our martial rule  
Only to merge by fresh amalgamation  
Like milk into a pool.

High upon ample and unwearying shoulders  
The Government sustain the freights, the fares,  
Voicing the People's Will and that of holders  
Of Ordinary Shares. EVOE.

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## Coming Shortly

**A**PRIL 20th, they say, is the date upon which Hitler has arranged to march through London. "March" is not the right word. He will come, I suppose, standing up in one of those large, surprisingly out-of-date-looking cars, preceded by innumerable beefy soldiers in side-cars and followed by the three Stadthalters and the ninety-one Gauleiters whose instruction in English ways and customs is now rapidly proceeding. The Stadthalters will wear their regulation peaked caps, but the Gauleiters, profiting by their knowledge of the country and anxious not to offend the susceptibilities of the populace, are likely to appear in top-hats and knickerbockers with large pipes in their mouths. We shall hope to see Ribbentrop, paying his second official visit to this country, and of course Goering and Goebbels and the humorous Streicher, who would make as good a Stadthalter as most. There will be plenty of aeroplanes overhead and lots of armoured cars, and no doubt, with typical German thoroughness, tea will

have been arranged for the whole party in the Corner House at the conclusion of the proceedings.

I hope it will keep fine for them. London can look so lovely in April. The tulips and wallflowers will be out and the green will be fresh on the trees and the ducks will be swimming and splashing in St. James's Park. And of course London will be filling up for the Season. All the best people will be back from the country to see the conqueror ride in. The date has been well chosen.

Something about the whole odd business makes me think of Galsworthy. He would have written it up supremely well, on the lines perhaps of his description of Queen Victoria's funeral with the funny bits left out. For Soames would not have approved. If, I mean, he were still with us, if he had not met his death earlier on through the defenestration of that picture (an unusual end, but I suppose his insurance company covered it), then, I say, he would not have approved. He would have been restless, unable to concentrate on *The Times* at his club, and he would have stepped out into the streets, mousing along, trying to piece together from snatches of conversation, from looks and gestures, what the people, what England was thinking. He would not, I believe, have liked the Gauleiters. For all their efforts he would have thought them almost certainly un-English. And Hitler? No, he wouldn't have cared for the chap. Never had. And Soames would have gone on his way oddly disturbed, wondering how they were going to keep it all from old Timothy.

As a matter of fact I don't altogether believe this tale about April 20th. We must be on our guard. The Hun is as wily as ever and may be deliberately attempting to deceive us. A nation capable of pretending that the *Graf Spee* was the *Admiral Scheer*, and changing the *Deutschland* into the *Lützow*, is capable of anything. It will not surprise me if the real date of Hitler's entry into London turns out to be April the thirtieth—or even the first.

However, assuming Hitler *is* here by April 20th, the question arises, will the Gauleiters have grasped the fact that the First Class Cricket Season opens a week or so later? I see complications here. We English can put up with a good deal; we don't mind, I mean, having our ships bombed by Spaniards or our trousers taken down by Japanese, and I dare say at a pinch we could accustom ourselves to the chaff we should get from America if Hitler pushed his way in here, but there's bound to be trouble if the Nazi overlords try to interfere with the Perambulators *v.* Etceteras match. They might so easily, you see, fail to realise its importance. Try putting Perambulators *v.* Etceteras into German and see where you get.

I don't want to be an alarmist, but if the Nazis are seriously taking courses in English manners and customs it seems a pity not to point out to them in time one at least of the possible pitfalls. I know the Nazis are thorough, and cricket is certain to be on the syllabus, but I don't put too much faith in those professors. Look at Czechoslovakia and Poland. Somebody must have tripped up somewhere in the special Gauleiters' Course in Manners and Customs among the Czechs and Poles, or else why all this unrest? We don't want anything of that kind here.

What I suggest is that Hitler should somehow be persuaded to put off his conquest of the British Empire until the autumn; then we could have some of the Gauleiters over here during the summer to watch some cricket and absorb something of the spirit of the game. Then, by the spring of 1941, we'd be all set for the great Inter-Gau Championships.

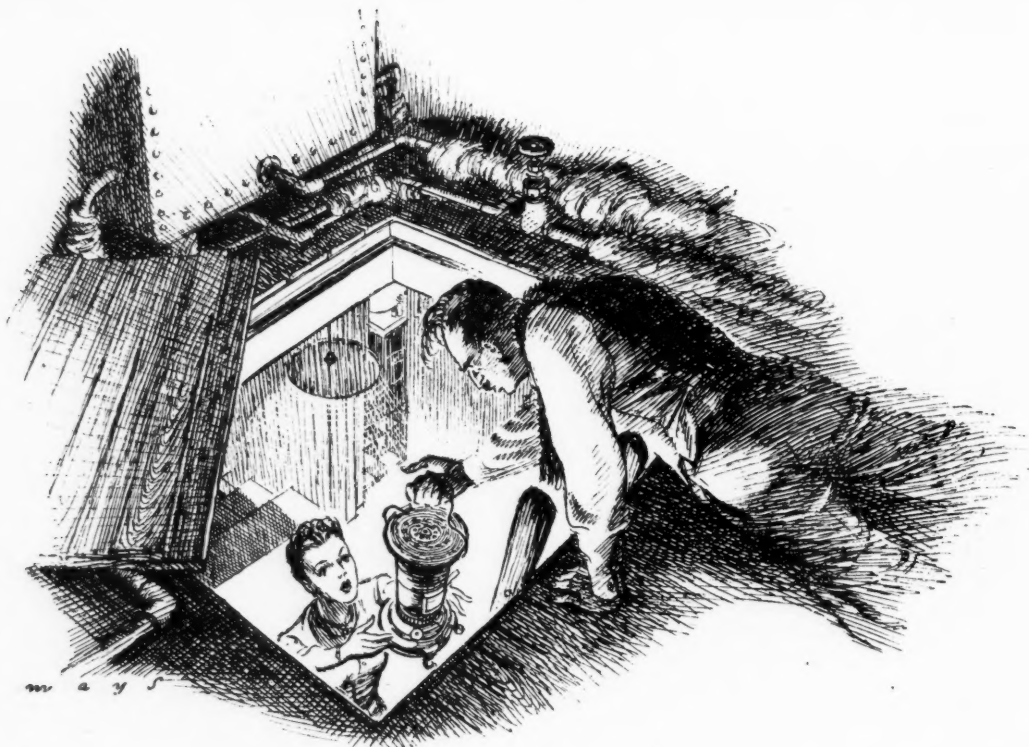
Doesn't that sound fascinating?

H. F. E.





A. TO J.



"Well, I only hope their pipes are frozen at Berchtesgaden."

## Russiprussity

(A Fantasy—translated from the Russian)

### IV

"BUT, M. Steelin," said the Senior Commissar for Vaguely Assisting the Germans, urgently, "it is Herr Robbintrip—"

There was no answer.

"Master!"

"Chief!"

"Man of Iron!"

"Man of Destiny!"

"President!"

"Joe!"

Still no answer came from the iron ruler of all the Russias. The thick lips moved and muttered; the fingers plucked at the pages of a book; the fierce eyes stared at the feet of the German envoy, which shuffled uneasily, as if the conscience were carried in those boots.

M. Buzzinoff, the Commissar, tried

again. "Master, here is Comrade Robbintrip," he said. "The German diplomatic wizard. The ubiquitous ambassador of our delicious allies the Prussians. The author of the Fraternal Pact of Dynamic Non-Aggression. The right-hand man—or should I say the left-hand man?—of Comrade Hitler. He has just," he added, "returned from the Finnish Front."

At last the large head was raised. The book fell from the fingers. The eyes, in which were contempt and loathing undisguised, rested upon Herr von Robbintrip. The lips pronounced a single word.

"Scum," said M. Steelin.

"I beg your pardon?" said the Commissar nervously.

"Scum," said the great man again.

"But surely——" twittered the Commissar, perceiving, as he thought, the familiar presage of a purge.

"The scum of humanity" is, I think, the exact phrase.

"But, Comrade, there must be some mistake——!"

"I thought it possible," said Steelin. "With Soviet charity I entertained that hope. But I have now seen—I will not say read—the Second Edition, revised and published *since* the signing by our dear Comrade here of the Fraternal Pact of Dynamic Non-Aggression. HERE IT IS!" the great man finished with a sudden roar. One of the great feet kicked out clumsily and the book travelled smartly across the floor.

Title upward, it lay between the

feet of Herr von Robbintrip and the Senior Commissar for Vaguely Assisting the Germans. Both looked down and observed that title with dismay:

MEIN KAMPF  
by  
ADOLF HITLER.

There was a nasty silence.

Both at last stooped to pick up the book. Both, as their heads collided, said "I beg your pardon."

"Permit me," said the Commissar, making a second attempt.

"NO!" roared the Russian despot. "Leave that tripe where it is. And oblige me, Comrade, by putting your foot on it."

"To which Comrade do you refer, Master?" said the embarrassed Commissar.

"To you, my dear Buzzinoff. Herr Robbintrip, I believe, finds it difficult to occupy the same position for long."

M. Buzzinoff obediently stood on *Mein Kampf*. Herr Robbintrip averted his gaze, opened his mouth, but said nothing.

"And now," said the Iron Man, as one who feels better, "perhaps I may be informed of the purpose of this well-timed and welcome visit from the German diplomatic wizard. I should have thought that there were bigger tasks for him in other capitals—Rome, for example, Tokyo, Madrid. How, by the way, is the dear old Axis? Would not a more accurate and fitting term be 'The Corkscrew'?"

"M. Steelin!" the German spluttered. "I must react to that with iron——"

But the Commissar tactfully broke in:

"It is about butter, Master. Our German friends are not wholly satisfied with the efforts I have made to supply them with butter, with oil and ore."

"How much butter have we actually supplied, Buzzinoff?"

"So far, it must be confessed," the Commissar replied, "the supplies of butter have been mainly ideological. Symbolic butter. But Comrade Robbintrip has seen the plans of all the factories, and has even attended an Inaugural Festival of Celebration to the Vague Notion of Supplying Fantastic Amounts of Revolutionary Butter to the Germans."

"It is well," replied the Russian despot. "Symbolic butter is the best. And who, after all, are we, the humble, ineffective Russians, to take upon ourselves the supply of gross material necessities to the superior German race? 'Scum,'" he continued reflectively. "'Scum of humanity.' And again, 'Scum.'"

The great Steelin was silent.

"Pardon me," said von Robbintrip suavely. "But a point occurs to me. It may be that Your Equality has misunderstood certain passages in the Work upon which my friend Buzzinoff is at this moment standing. It is true that it contains one or two, at first sight, derogatory remarks about the Russian rulers. But as you will recall, Your Equality, it was written very many years ago; and the sentence now present in Your Equality's mind, the sentence containing the expression—er—'scum'—if you will forgive my repeating it—was applied particularly, if I remember rightly, to 'the present rulers' of Russia, that is, to 'the present rulers' at that time, or, in other words, to the past rulers of Russia at the present time, if you understand me."

"I understand you but I dislike you none the less," was the steel response. "If you are right, it would surely have been a simple technical feat to make the necessary adjustments in the second edition, on which Comrade Buzzinoff has so appropriately planted his hairy feet. Further, as it happens, I was one of the rulers of Russia at the time you mention—so that cock is out of action, as the English say. In any case, I should not without a heavy proletarian protest permit even that poor poop Loonin to be vilified by the half-baked imbecile who now controls the destinies of Germany—which, by the way, is no more than Germany deserves. 'Scum!'" concluded the Man of Metal reflectively.

Von Robbintrip, for once, had nothing to say.

"I now perceive," continued Steelin, after a pause, "why your Fuehrer is so eager to conquer foreign countries. Every fresh unfortunate who comes under his sway is compelled, I believe, to purchase a copy of the verbose, ill-written, and wholly laughable book on



"And what do you think Hitler said then?"

which Comrade Buzzinoff is standing. On each of these copies Herr Hitler receives what the bourgeois nations still describe as 'a royalty'. So though neither he nor his nation has any hope of ruling or retaining the invaded territories (they could not govern a goldfish), at least Herr Hitler will always have the chance to enrich himself by increasing his (compulsory) sales. No wonder he wishes for more *Lesensraum!* Reading-room. Ha, ha! Am I right?"

"M. Steelin!" von Robbintrip began tempestuously.

"Odd, by the way," the Russian went on smoothly, "that a man who, like your Fuehrer, modestly intends to dominate the world should have taken so little trouble to see the world. If we except a week-end visit to Venice, he has not, I think, seen any of the countries of which he proposes to be king. And to see, as we know, is to understand—though that formula, I acknowledge, Comrade, does not seem to cover your own sojourn in England."

"My Fuehrer," said the German, stiffly, "during the last Great War spent a good deal of time in France."

"From which, if my memory is operating precisely, he was ignominiously ejected by the English. Not, surely, a very heartening precedent?"

"Talking of travel," said the German, who seemed to control his speech with difficulty, "how soon, do you think, M. Steelin, may we look forward to meeting, as fellow-neutrals, in Helsinki?"

"Helsinki?" said the Russian. "Helsinki? Ah, yes. Finland. To be sure. You have been to Finland, I hear. What made you go there?"

"One of your incompetent aeroplanes conveyed me there by mistake."

"I am sorry. You will be safer at home, Herr Robbintrip. None of your aeroplanes, I think, will make the mistake of flying to London."

"You wait," said the German grimly.

"By all means. The Russians know how to wait. So, by the way, do the English. It is a lesson which the Germans have still to learn. Their patience is exhausted before they begin. About this butter, for example——"

"Yes?" said the German eagerly.

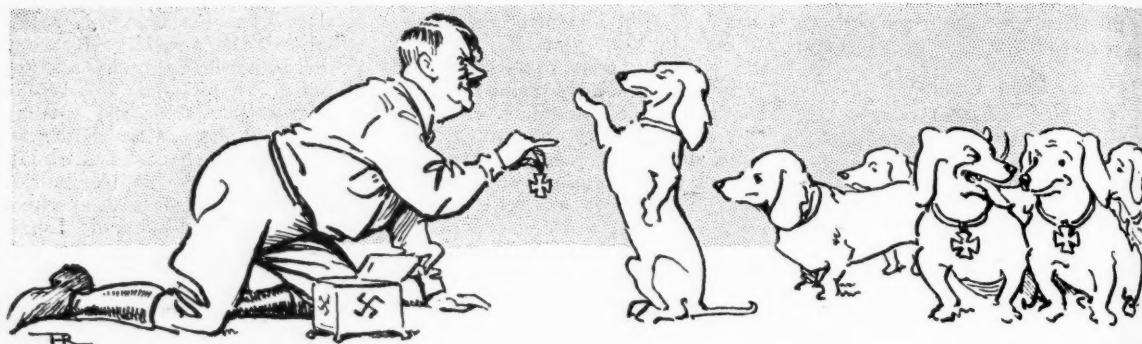
"You wait, Comrade. You wait. To-morrow, perhaps. To-day I am tired."

The great head fell forward and the Iron Man took to muttering again. "Scum," he muttered drowsily. "Scum of humanity," and once more, "Scum. Scum of humanity. Scum."

Russia slept.

A. P. H.





## Shock Dogs

WE follow the war pretty closely in the bar parlour of the "Angler's Rest," and not much develops that escapes the notice of the little group of serious thinkers which, presided over by Mr. Mulliner, assembles there nightly to discuss the progress of hostilities. The news that Germany was employing large numbers of dogs on the Western Front reached us early. It was Miss Postlethwaite, our well-informed barmaid, who found the item in her evening paper and gave it out for what it was worth.



it says that the foe have started using dogs in the front line."

"Frogs?" said a Double Whisky and Splash, who is a trifle hard of hearing, and the razor-like keenness of whose faculties always tends to become somewhat blurred towards closing-time.

"What sort of dogs?" asked a Pint of Bitter.

"It doesn't tell you that. I suppose they'd be dachshunds."

"Dachshunds aren't frogs," the Double Whisky pointed out. "You're thinking of dogs."

The Pint of Bitter seemed dubious.

"What can dogs do?"

"What can frogs do?"

"Especially dachshunds," went on the Pint, who is one of our clearest reasoners.

"Owing to its low-slung chassis a dachshund can only nip you in the ankle, and what use is that for military purposes? Effective if our troops wore dancing-pumps, but they don't."



"They wear boots," said Miss Postlethwaite. "I've seen them."

"Stout boots reaching high up the leg."

"Perhaps," hazarded a Gin and Bitters, "this is another of Hitler's reckless gambles. He's staking everything on them forgetting to put their boots on one morning."

"They wouldn't, not in this cold weather."

"Show me the frog that can intimidate a British soldier," said the Double Whisky, "and I'll eat it."

"If you ask me," said a Light Lager, "the whole thing sounds silly."

"It is silly," said Mr. Mulliner. "It is obviously just one more of those visionary schemes which the Fuehrer thinks out in his mountain retreat and hands on to the High Command. I must say," he continued, thoughtfully stirring his hot Scotch and lemon,

"I cannot help feeling sorry for the German High Command these days. Sherman said war was hell, and they must agree with him. I am told that Brauchitsch confessed to a usually reliable neutral source the other day that these bright ideas of the Leader's were getting him down. They make his life one constant embarrassment. If he accepts them, they ruin his whole plan of campaign, and if he turns them down, he feels like someone telling a child there is no Santa Claus. And what makes it all the more unpleasant is that the man is so touchy. If you thwart him, he flies into a tantrum and flings himself on the floor and eats pieces out of the carpet."

A Lime-juice and Soda, who reads diet books, pursed his lips.

"Can't be good for him, that."

"Most unwholesome."

"I wonder that doctor of his doesn't stop him."

"He tries to. Over and over again he has told him 'No



heavy carpets or Persian rugs. Just an occasional light doormat, to keep the strength up.' But what can you do with a wilful man?"

"What I can't make out," said the Lager, "is what he expects to do with these dogs. I can't see them accomplishing anything constructive."

"He may be intending to use them later on as the spear-head of his invasion of England."

"How about the quarantine?"

"No doubt he has overlooked that. Or there may be some idea in his mind of getting Goebbels to start a blast of propaganda, leading the animals to believe that there are bones buried underneath the Maginot Line. This would cause them to start digging, and no doubt he hopes that they

would eventually undermine the foundations, thus causing the system of fortifications to collapse. It never occurs to him how easily Gamelin could foil such an onslaught by putting up notices saying 'No Dogs Admitted Unless On Leads.'"

"He doesn't think things out."

"That is his cardinal fault."

"Too much the dreamy artist."

"Precisely. And in modern totalitarian warfare you have got to think of everything and be prepared for every emergency. Look at what happened in Finland the other day. The Russians had concentrated large forces at the rail-head in preparation for a mass attack, and they were just buying their sandwiches and weekly papers preparatory to taking their seats in the train, when it was discovered that the Finns had raided the booking office and destroyed all the third-class tickets. The expense of sending the expedition first-class was of course prohibitive, and all the arrangements had to be cancelled."

"I never heard about that," said the Pint of Bitter.

"It was in all the papers," said Mr. Mulliner. "This is an economic war, and you have to watch the expenses all the time. In the matter which we have been discussing, it is the expense which I see as the chief objection to any idea of using dogs as shock troops. That, and the fact that you can't scuttle a dachshund."

"Frogs aren't expensive," said the Double Whisky.

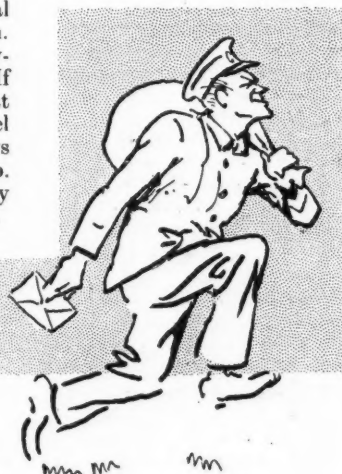
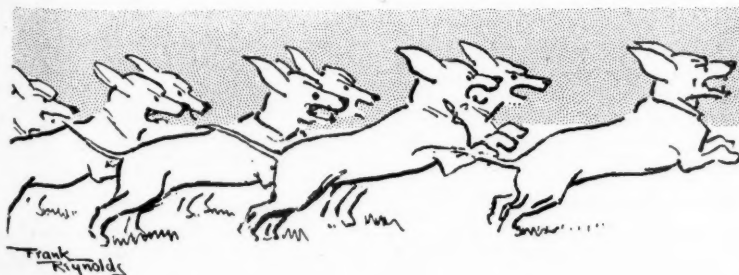
"You see, what Hitler has omitted to take into his calculations is the fact that a dog is only allowed one bite. All the defence has to do is to throw out a fringe of postmen to draw these dachshunds' fire, and wave after wave of them go over the top and immediately become a spent force. You may argue that it would settle down to a grim war of attrition and that eventually the supply of postmen would give out. But can Germany stand the strain of constantly providing fresh dachshunds? Each dog, remember, will presumably be awarded the Iron Cross. That will run into money. Add cost of licence, flea powder and so forth, and you begin to see how the thing mounts up. Reflect, too, that it will be necessary to keep up the morale of these dachshunds with entertainments behind the line. This involves an enormous staff of performing dogs, each of which will have to have a licence, flea powder and the Iron Cross."

"And rations," said the Pint.

"Exactly," said Mr. Mulliner. "Every dachshund I have ever known, in addition to its normal meals, wanted its cup of tea at five o'clock, with cake. Germany being notoriously deficient in the essential fats, where is this cake to come from? You can't fob a dachshund off with something *ersatz* made of stinging-nettles and wood-fibre. The first thing that will happen is that these dogs will be fraternising with the enemy in the hope of getting sweet biscuits."

There was a thoughtful silence. The Double Whisky shook his head. It was plain that in the interval which had elapsed since he had last spoken he had been devoting the whole force of his intellect to the thing.

"I used to keep frogs as a boy," he said. "Slimy, yes, and useful for putting in people's beds, but not an ounce of the real fighting spirit in them. They'll never get anywhere by using frogs. If you ask me, it's what I would call a counsel of despair and shows they're cracking up. All over by June, is my opinion." P. G. W.



## At the Pictures

## RICH AND POOR

FOR ME GINGER ROGERS can do very little wrong, but even she has a hard job to lift *Fifth Avenue Girl* (Director: GREGORY LA CAVA) out of the hackneyed run. Here we have that unfortunate rich family again, the one we have seen so many times since *My Man Godfrey* (by the way, this is a story very much like *My Man Godfrey*, and moreover directed by the same man): the flighty mother, the imposed-upon father, the apparently worthless but fundamentally good-hearted children; all bored, all cynical, all wasting their lives until the casual irruption of an outsider hitherto insulated from the deadening influences of wealth. Nobody with money, Hollywood believes (or rather, finds it profitable to announce), has any sense. In *My Man Godfrey* the outsider was a man; here it is a girl (Miss ROGERS, as if you didn't know). The rich pump-manufacturer (WALTER CONNOLLY) brings her into his household with the sole object of making his family take some notice of him again. In this of course he succeeds: all ends neatly and happily. . . . The best part of this basically ordinary picture is the park sequence near the beginning; when the rich man first meets the girl and they both listen to a citizen very knowledgeable about the habits of seals. Much of the rest is old stuff which VERREE TEASDALE, FRANKLIN PANGBORN and other competent and experienced people do what they can with. There is some good amusing dialogue, her share of which Miss ROGERS delivers very effectively in the "throwing-away" manner.

You can tell from the title of *Dust be my Destiny* (Director: LEWIS SEILER) that JOHN GARFIELD has his usual part. It has apparently been decided—with, I admit, some justification—that he and PRISCILLA LANE make an ideal "team" for this sort of

story: he as the angry, bitter, tough, poor young man with mild persecution mania, she as his tender, dewy-eyed, understanding girl. The story follows well-worn lines—prison, the "county work farm," escape, train-jumping, living "on the run," court scenes, precarious jobs—but nobody could pretend that it isn't absorbing and often exciting. These pursuit stories can always be made exciting. They have another invariable characteristic: since they cover so much ground they give opportunities to numbers of small-part players, and in this one ALAN

glass, with all the gold gilded, all the lilies painted regardless of expense. I don't see why children shouldn't like it, but for adults there isn't very much except BERT LAHR's performance as the *Cowardly Lion*: he is not only admirably made up, he is also a character, and he is funny. The story, as every American child knows, is about a little girl (JUDY GARLAND—she is hardly little enough, by this time) who makes a journey to the *Wizard* (FRANK MORGAN) in the company of the *Lion*, the *Tin Woodman* (JACK HALEY) and the *Scarecrow* (RAY BOLGER). They all go to ask for something, and they all get it, in defiance of the wicked *Witch* (MARGARET HAMILTON). The fact that this is all a dream the little girl has after being hit on the head in a Kansas whirlwind is pointed and made clear by the colour; for the first sequences, before the whirlwind, are in sepia only. The whole thing is done with immense gusto and very little taste, and as I say, I don't see why children shouldn't love it.

*Band Waggon* (Director: MARCEL VARNEL) has a very large ready-made public, most of whom I suppose will be pleased with it. It is an attempt to make a story out of the famous radio programme, and I won't deny that it has good moments; but easily the best are contributed in a little speech of a minute or two by Mr. MIDDLETON, who had nothing to do with the radio *Band Waggon* at all. You see him outside Broadcasting House when ARTHUR ASKEY and RICHARD MURDOCH have been ejected from their celebrated flat. Pointing to the pile of their furniture on the pavement, he advises them sternly to get rid of all this dead wood. . . . From the rest, one gets that impression so often given by British films: that it was all tremendous fun for the actors. R. M.



(Fifth Avenue Girl)

## THE PRICE OF STEPPING OUT

Mr. Borden . . . . .	WALTER CONNOLLY
Miss Grey . . . . .	GINGER ROGERS
Higgins . . . . .	FRANKLIN PANGBORN

HALE, FRANK McHUGH, HENRY ARMETTA, FERIKE BOROS (she's also in *Fifth Avenue Girl*) and others are excellent as usual.

In spite of the gloomy implications of the title, the ending is happy: almost a bath of happiness in fact. One gathers that the man chiefly responsible for this is a defence attorney whose gently emotional manner would have had upon me, I regret to say, quite the wrong effect. He said all the right things, and some more, but the way he said them I thought regrettable. However, he convinced a jury that looked notably unsympathetic.

*The Wizard of Oz* (Director: VICTOR FLEMING) is a fairy-story seen through an immense Technicolor magnifying-

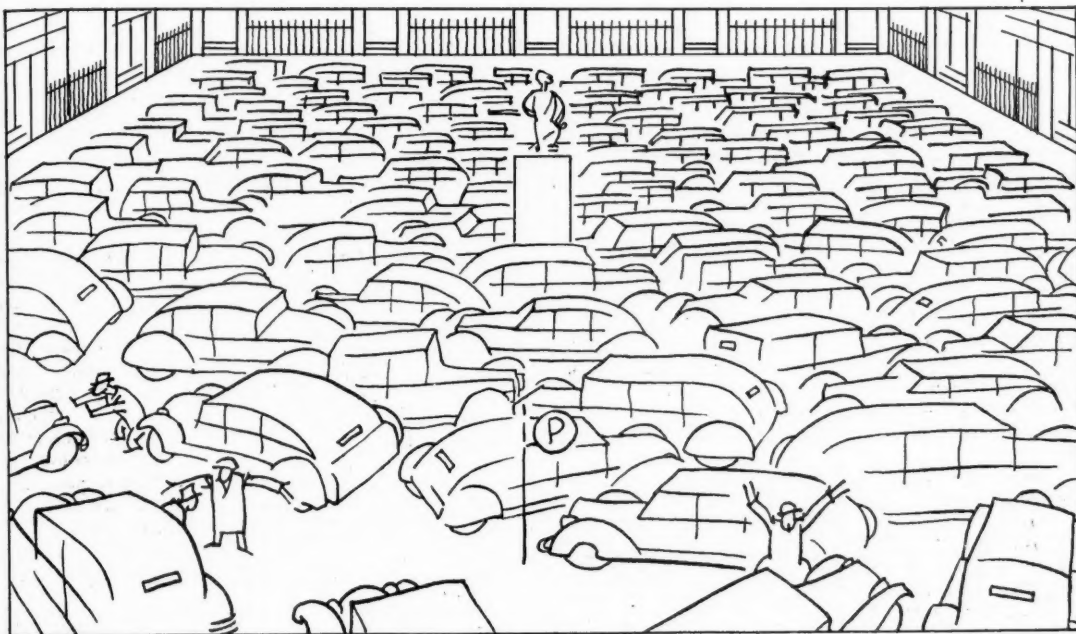
glass, with all the gold gilded, all the lilies painted regardless of expense. I don't see why children shouldn't like it, but for adults there isn't very much except BERT LAHR's performance as the *Cowardly Lion*: he is not only admirably made up, he is also a character, and he is funny. The story, as every American child knows, is about a little girl (JUDY GARLAND—she is hardly little enough, by this time) who makes a journey to the *Wizard* (FRANK MORGAN) in the company of the *Lion*, the *Tin Woodman* (JACK HALEY) and the *Scarecrow* (RAY BOLGER). They all go to ask for something, and they all get it, in defiance of the wicked *Witch* (MARGARET HAMILTON). The fact that this is all a dream the little girl has after being hit on the head in a Kansas whirlwind is pointed and made clear by the colour; for the first sequences, before the whirlwind, are in sepia only. The whole thing is done with immense gusto and very little taste, and as I say, I don't see why children shouldn't love it.

**Leap Year Bargain Corner**  
"MEN! ALL HALF PRICE & LESS"  
Advt. in *Liverpool Paper*.

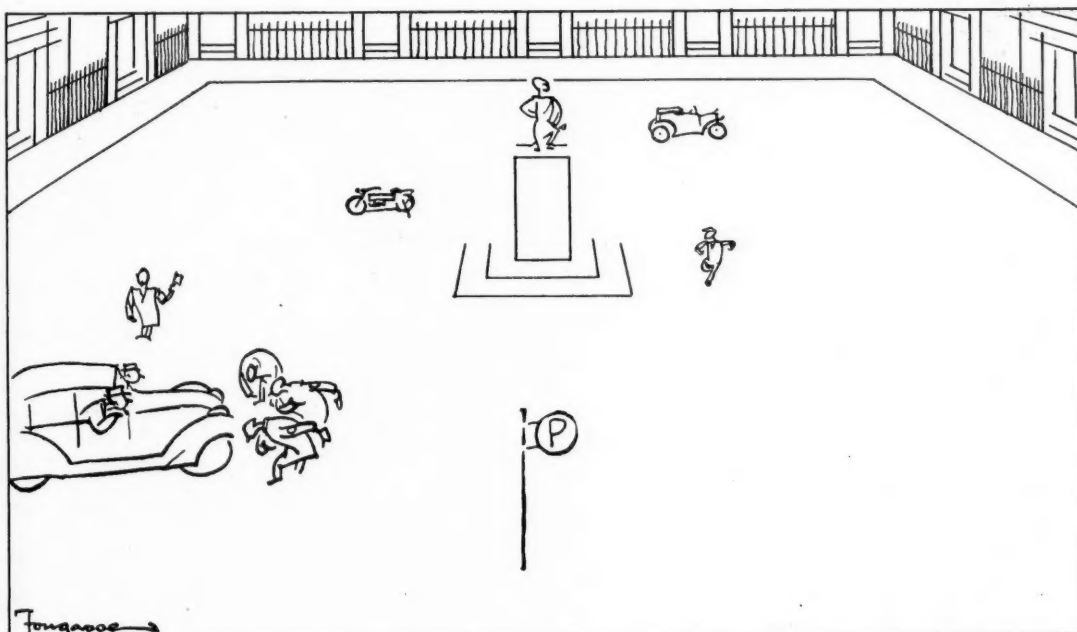


THE CHANGING FACE OF BRITAIN

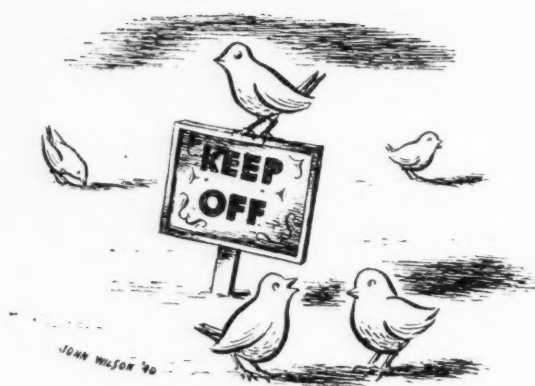
XXV.—PARKING SPACE



1



2



"Tony never did respect authority."

## Behind the Lines

XXI.—Home Service

**F**AS est—which means it's always wise  
*Ab hoste*—from our enemies  
*Doceri*—to annex or pinch  
 Any idea which seems a cinch.  
 To which I add *Festina lente* :  
 Don't do it till you've counted twenty.

It's commonly accepted by  
 The thoughtful jurist (such as I)  
 That punishment should fit the time,  
 The circumstances and the crime.  
 The facts, the local situation  
 Demand profound consideration  
 Before the jurist can begin  
 To calculate the price of sin.  
 But we distinguish as a rule  
 Between the villain and the fool,  
 And since, by general accord,  
 True virtue is its own reward,  
 So folly may itself provide  
 Such sentence as should be applied.

These are the reasons why I think  
 That Parliament is right to shrink  
 From making death the penalty  
 For listening to the B.B.C.

It's Folly, not a Major Sin,  
 Week after week to listen in  
 To some unenterprising bore  
 Who tells you what you knew before.  
 There may be some—there's always this—  
 Whose ignorance can make it bliss;  
 To hang them, foolish as they are,  
 Is going, surely, *much* too far.

But men who have for stock-in-trade  
 A husky voice that's overlaid  
 With alcohol, and interlaced  
 With aitches doggedly misplaced,

Convinced that they are giving so  
 A "little Cockney cameo";  
 And women who impersonate,  
 In accents wildly out of date,  
 Some false, imaginary char  
 And make you wonder *what* they are:  
 If the authorities should find  
 These contraband, I shall not mind.

And if they thoughtfully instal  
 Death penalty by axe for all  
 Who have (and boast about it) "RHYTHM,"  
 Then I am *definitely* with 'em. A. A. M.

## What to Do With Our Girls

**M**UMMY, I think we ought to have a *frightfully* serious talk."

"Very well, darling. What about?"

"Mummy, that's an awfully Patricia-Perkins thing to say, truly it is."

"Patricia Perkins? Do I know who Patricia Perkins is?"  
 "Oh, she isn't anybody. It was just a Patricia-Perkins thing to say, that was all. Frightfully."

"Very well. Then this talk—what is it about?"

"Mummy! Nach'rally it's about me. *Would* I be having a serious talk about anything else?"

"No, I suppose not."

"I mean, I'm frightfully interested in you, and the dogs, and Daddy, and us having to economise so much because of the war, and the News and everything—but this is important. It's about me leaving school."

"My leaving school."

"Yes, that's what I said. Well, I think we ought to settle about it."

"I quite agree. Your School Certificate results were really very good and—"

"Mummy! Please don't say I'm interrupting, or anything like that, because truly I'm not in the *least*, but honestly you simply *can't* talk about School Certificate. It just isn't done. School Cert. Why, I don't suppose most people would even know what you meant. Nobody in the world says anything except School Cert."

"School Cert, then. And your last report says that you are developing a sense of civic responsibility, and so I wondered— Darling, would you mind not making that hole in the chintz worse?"

"I'm frightfully sorry. What else does Old Fly-by-Night say in my report?"

"As a matter of fact it's a very good report. She says you have a steady influence on the House and—"

"Hee-hee-hee!"

"Please mind the chair-cover."

"Yes, all right. Well, it's about what I'm going to do when I leave school. Hasn't Fly-by-Night said anything about that? She's completely crackers about girls having careers."

"What sort of a career do you want? Or don't you know?"

"Oh, I *know* all right. Absolutely definitely. It's the only thing in the world I ever have wanted."

"Darling, I'd no idea. But I'll do whatever I can to help you. What is it?"

"To be a film-star in Hollywood. But of course I realise what a frightful expense the journey would be. Besides, I've

got such a hopeless face, and I couldn't *possibly* act. Besides, I don't really *mean* it. The only thing is, I don't really know what career I do want."

"You'll anyhow be taking a Domestic Science course, and then perhaps——"

"Yes, that'll be frightful fun. And d' you know, Mummy, what I've been thinking? Are there any women harbour-masters? I'd frightfully like to become one, if there are."

"Darling, you really must be sensible. And leave the chair-cover alone. Would you like to go to college and——"

"No, I definitely wouldn't. But I wouldn't a bit mind training in a beauty-parlour, or working for a vet, or being some sort of kennel-maid somewhere."

"That seems rather waste of an expensive education. And besides, none of those jobs really lead anywhere, and I want you to remember that you've got to earn——"

"Oh, yes, I know. But perhaps I'll marry somebody frightfully rich."

"Darling, after all the years in which I've been telling you——"

"Yes, I know you have, Mummy, and how girls used to be made to think that they *had* to marry, and how awful it was for your generation, and now it's all quite different. But honestly, I think there was an awful lot in it, only

unfortunately we don't know any rich families for me to marry into. But I tell you what I'd *really* like to do, if I can't get a rich husband or go on the flicks. Oh, gosh, I'm afraid I've torn the chair-cover! I'm most *frightfully* sorry. I can't think how it happened."

"I can. Well, perhaps I'd better see what Miss Patterson thinks about it all."

"Honestly, Mummy, I wouldn't pay a lot of attention to Old Fly-by-Night, because really and truly she's batty. I mean, honestly she is. Besides, I know what I really want to do when I leave school."

"What?"

"Well, I thought if I could just stay at home and have as much riding as possible, and of course groom Macduff myself . . ."

\* \* \* \* \*

"DEAR MISS PATTERSON,—We were so glad to get such a good report of Joyce's work and to know that you feel she is developing a real sense of responsibility and has such a thorough grasp of what you so rightly describe as the difficulties of present-day life.

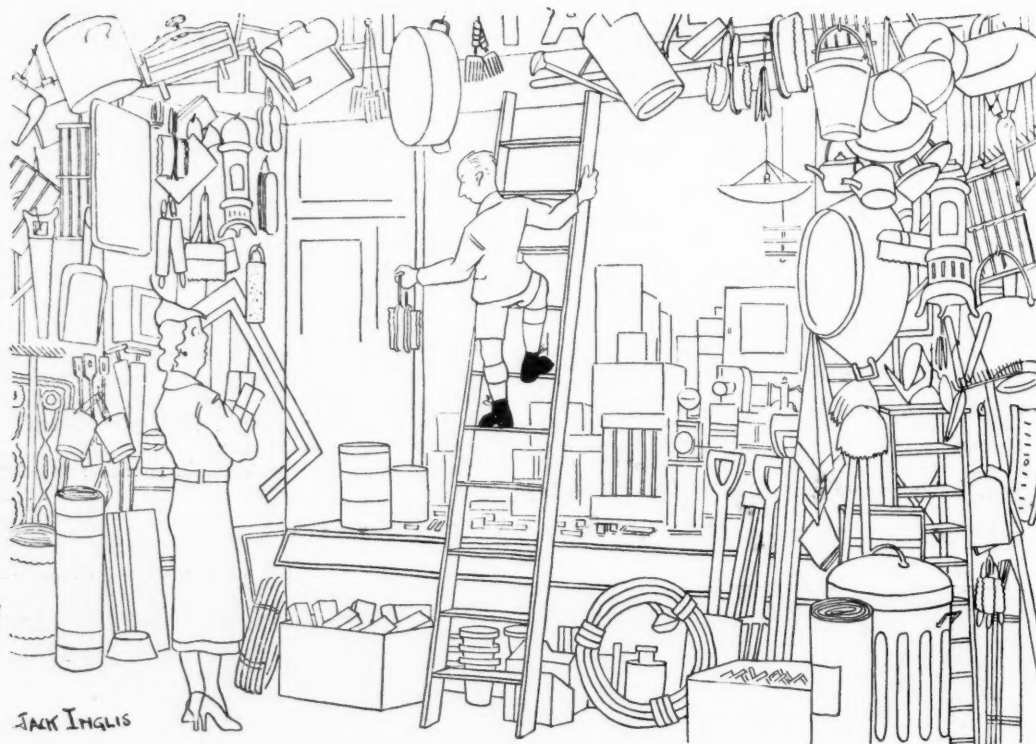
"At the same time, we sometimes rather wonder . . ."

E. M. D.



POPULAR MISCONCEPTIONS (IN GERMANY)—THE GERMANS





*"We don't sell batteries, Miss—they would only clutter up the place."*

## Save Your Paper

OUR family doctor was a Dr. Legg. He once alarmed my mother by telling her that I was dermatographic. My mother asked what he would prescribe for this, but Dr. Legg explained that it only meant that my skin was very sensitive and would mark easily. He then proceeded to write "FRED" on my back with his thumb-nail.

Later, the doctor acquired such an overwhelming passion for writing things on those of his patients who were dermatographic that he got into serious trouble with the British Medical Association. He began by writing the patient's initials with his thumb-nail and perhaps adding a jocular line or two. Occasionally, when he found a particularly good subject, he wrote his prescription on the patient's back, so that when he went to the chemist he had to lift up his shirt before he could obtain his tonic. After some time it occurred to Dr. Legg that he might put

this hobby to some more useful purpose, so he started writing on the backs of his dermatographic patients, "Harold Legg, M.D., Surgery Hours, 9.30-10.30. Thursdays, 6-7.30."

Dr. Legg went on doing this until a Miss Doncaster, whom he had annoyed by telling her that there was nothing wrong with her nerves, complained to the British Medical Association about it. The Association held a meeting to decide whether Dr. Legg had been advertising, but by this time the writing had faded and Miss Doncaster was unable to produce any evidence. Dr. Legg was severely reprimanded, and after that confined himself strictly to initials.

It occurs to me that the doctor's hobby might be of some service to the nation in our present troubles. It would be very simple, now that we have machinery for registering everybody and everything, to compile a register of dermatographics. They

could be used at the Government's discretion as sandwich-men (in warmer weather, we hope), for carrying urgent telegrams, for delivering handbills, and as cash-books in banks and department stores.

Government officials could also write secret memoranda on them with greater safety than on paper. After all, one could scarcely leave an adult dermatographic in a taxi by accident.

o o

## More Slippery Roads

"A patrol vessel anchored in the roads began to zig-zag . . ."—*Daily Paper.*

o o

"The best way to dry wet leather shoes and boots is to fill them with hot oats."—*Liverpool Paper.*

The Scots can walk for miles on porridge.



SPEED THE PLOUGH

# Mr. PUNCH'S HOSPITAL COMFORTS FUND



IN A GOOD CAUSE

## AUDITORS' REPORT

We have audited the books of the "Punch Hospital Comforts Fund" for the period ended 31st December, 1939, with the vouchers relating thereto.

We certify that no expenses of any kind have been charged against the Fund and that all payments have been in respect of materials distributed.

101 Leadenhall Street,  
London, E.C.3.  
5th January, 1940.

**J. H. HUGILL & Co.,**  
Chartered Accountants,  
Hon. Auditors.

**Y**OU are asked to think and to think in good time of the wounded. At any moment their needs may become imperative. They will not consider themselves heroes, they will not complain; they will be those who have neither fallen in action nor come safely through the ordeal, but are part of the reparable human wastage of war; we shall hear them speaking again—the less seriously disabled—in the language long ago familiar to us: "I got my packet at —; I was luckier than some," and yet there will be months of pain in front of them before they can take their place on active service or in civilian life once more.

You are also asked to think of the Navy at sea, the men in the trenches, the men flying, minesweepers, search-light posts, anti-aircraft stations. All are in exposed, cold, wet situations. They need Balaclava helmets, stockings, gloves, mittens and woollen waistcoats for the winter.

Mr. Punch has already distributed large quantities of materials of all kinds, but there is a great deal more to be done. Cold weather has arrived and the need for woollen articles is very urgent. Every penny subscribed will be used for the comfort of the men serving, or Hospital patients, and no expenses whatever will be deducted. Though we know well that these are days of privation and self-denial for all, we yet ask you, those who can, to send us donations, large or small, according to your means; for experience in the last war has proved a hundred times over how urgent is the call and how invaluable is the assistance that can be rendered. Will you please address all contributions and inquiries to: Punch Hospital Comforts Fund, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.



## Impressions of Parliament

### Synopsis of the Week

**Tuesday, February 6th.**—Lords: Various Bills Advanced.

Commons: Debate on Agriculture.

**Wednesday, February 7th.**—Lords: Debate on Education.

Commons: Debates on Turkish Debts Agreement, Chatham House, and Lord Hankey's Salary.

**Thursday, February 8th.**—Lords: Statement on Progress of the War.

Commons: Statement on Progress of the War. Debate on Control of Food Prices.

**Tuesday, February 6th.**

A man of more courage than sense, Mr. GAL- LACHER went through a tremendous barracking this afternoon when he insisted, in spite of Sir VICTOR WARRENDER'S denial, that British conscripts were being offered bribes to go and fight for "Baron Mannerheim's private army," and threatened to raise the matter on the adjournment. The feeling grows that since he is so sorry for poor little Russia in her daily humiliations at the hands of the greedy Finnish monster he should buy a fur coat and a ticket to Leningrad.

The death penalty is being considered, Mr. CHAMBERLAIN announced, for the disclosure of information to the

enemy. To earn it something more drastic will be required than an indiscretion on the top of a bus, but *méfiez-vous*, all the same.

The CHANCELLOR announced that the Government decline to abandon their scheme for compensation for war damage to property, and Mr. MORRISON

in a paper which reminded him that SCOTT had some time ago been a client of the firm of solicitors of which he was a partner, though not at present a working one; and the House turned to the Government's Bill for giving a tonic to agriculture.

This was very poorly received. Its

Second Reading was moved, the Minister being away ill, by Mr. COLVILLE, who explained that its provisions include a reduction of the minimum area qualifying for the ploughing-up grant to one acre, and a system of Exchequer grants, up to fifty per cent., for drainage.

Mr. TOM WILLIAMS and Mr. WILFRID ROBERTS led the assault, but the speech of the day came from Mr. LLOYD GEORGE. He ranked food production as of equal importance with the Navy and Air Force. He recalled that since 1918 four million acres had been

allowed to go out of cultivation, while the population was larger by five millions. The attacks on our shipping were already more formidable than anything we had faced for the first two and a half years of the last war. Germany had had the sense to expand her farming as part of her rearmament programme. We had not, and unless we were very careful we should crash.



THE GREAT TWIN BRETHREN  
SIR JOHN REITH and SIR ANDREW DUNCAN

said that the meat ration will come into force on March 11th, and will be to the value of 1s. 10d. per week if you are over six and 11d. per week if you are not.

All kinds of good things such as snails, frogs, liver, kidneys, tongue, ox-tail, sausages, meat-pies and tripe are not rationed, so we shall not do too badly, particularly as butcher's meat will not be rationed at restaurants but only limited in supply. If you are desperate for a Chateaubriand you must arrive early.

The introduction of two new boys who are already prefects is an uncommon sight. Both Sir JOHN REITH and Sir ANDREW DUNCAN came through the ordeal well, the former, who raises the average height of the House by several inches, being asked by Mr. BUCHANAN for a signature tune while he put his name in the book.

The P.M.'s announcement of an agreement with Japan about the *Asama Maru* incident was welcome. Nine of the Germans who appear the least eligible for military service are to be handed over to the Japanese, who in their turn are instructing their shipping companies not to carry individuals from belligerent countries who might be fighting-men.

Mr. BURGIN made a very honest little statement explaining how, after he had told the House last week that he had never heard of Mr. CHARLES KINGSLEY SCOTT, he saw a photograph



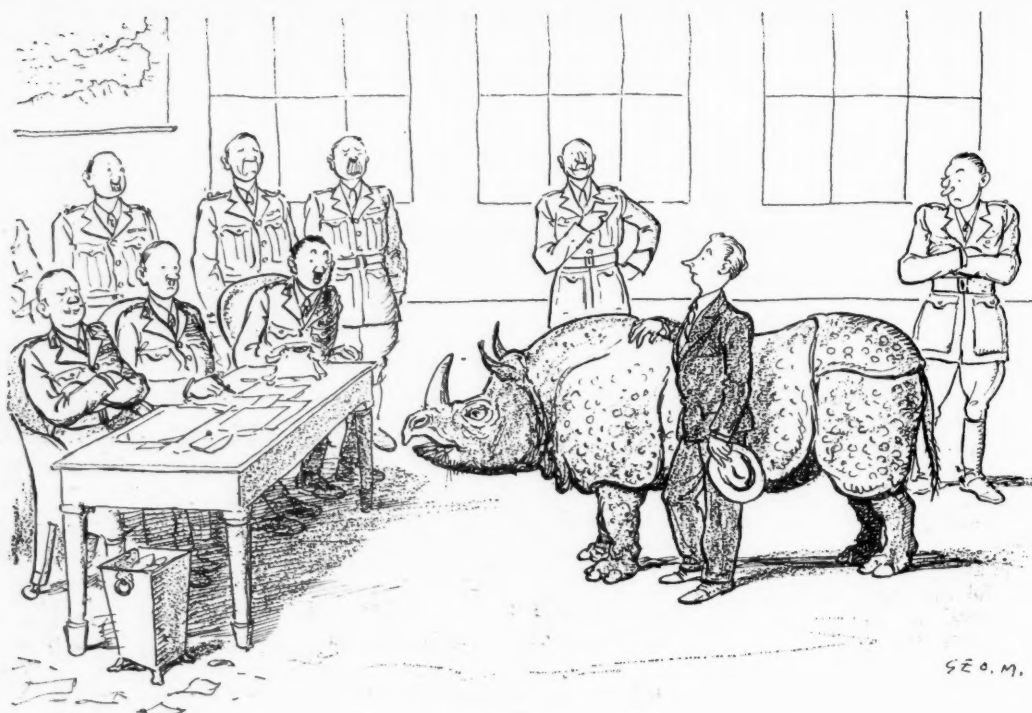
BACK TO BUSINESS

I.—MR. LLOYD GEORGE AT THE PLOUGH



BACK TO BUSINESS

II.—MR. LINDSAY AT THE DESK



*"I just thought maybe you might like to have him as a mascot for the Tanks."*

He thought we had just enough time, but the present Bill was ludicrously inadequate. The Minister was all right, the trouble lay with the Exchequer. "You cannot dig for victory with a pair of Treasury scissors."

Apparently anxious to show what keen farmers the Cabinet were, Sir SAMUEL HOARE intervened, but rather annoyed the House by dragging up irrelevant bits of Mr. LLOYD GEORGE's political past. Mr. LLOYD GEORGE himself had been absolutely realistic.

Two other speeches in particular were interesting. Mr. JOHN MORGAN, a well-known agricultural journalist, gave a shocking picture of the condition of farming, and Sir RALPH GLYN declared with admirable frankness that: "We have worshipped so long at the altar of cheapness, we have done so much to gain votes in urban areas by not explaining the truth to the people that we find ourselves now hard-and-fast against a situation from which there is no escape." These are significant words from a Conservative.

*Wednesday, February 7th.*—Anxious about the effects of the war on the education of children and the moral welfare of young people between

fourteen and twenty, the PRIMATE asked the Government to make a statement on educational policy. He said that nearly half a million children in the vulnerable areas had had no schooling between September and January and were running wild in the streets. The time had come for compulsory education to be reintroduced in the evacuation areas. Parents should be given a second chance to send their children away, on the understanding that they could not be brought back during a school period.

Lord DE LA WARR agreed with him that, though the risk of air raids was still great, those children who stayed must go to school, and he announced that as soon as accommodation allowed attendance would again be compulsory.

A scrappy but not dull day in the Junior Witan. Major TRYON told it of a new service for urgent private telegrams to the B.E.F. Mr. CHURCHILL, making his eloquent most of a chance to tilt at "Narsi" methods, announced that lightships are to be protected. Captain WALLACE gave details of the important agreement between the Government and the railways. Mr. HUDSON got approval for the Debts

Agreement with Turkey, described by Mr. PETHICK-LAWRENCE as "feeding a dog with his own tail"; and finally the House haggled, not in its most dignified manner, about the cost of the services of Chatham House and of Lord HANKEY.

*Thursday, February 8th.*—"Nous sommes d'accord," said the P.M., describing the complete harmony between France and Britain. His survey of the war began with a most satisfactory account of the recent meeting of the Supreme War Council in Paris, going on to praise our airmen for the way in which they had stood up to appalling weather conditions, and to condemn the Nazi technique of machine-gunning fishermen and light-housemen as sheer gangsterism of which civilisation must be purged. He had not much news for the House, except that further aid from this country was on its way to the heroic Finns.

The Government's scheme for controlling the prices of essential food-stuffs was then debated, Sir JOHN SIMON claiming that a rise of twelve points in the food index had been prevented.

## No, I'm Afraid Not

"NO—I'm afraid not . . ."  
 "Then perhaps I'd better spell it. This line's so bad. SMEDLEY. Smedley, Edith Smedley here. We met at the Hunters'. You know, Jessie and Bill Hunter. Jessie told me all about you, what wonderful work you do and all that. I don't expect you remember? Yes, before the war. This war. The one we're doing now, I mean. You must go to heaps of parties, of course. Yes, Jessie told me to be sure to get in touch with you. She told me all about you, all the wonderful things you're doing. Didn't she tell you about me?"

"No, I'm afraid not."

"I suppose you're awfully busy these days, with your own work and war work too. I mean, you don't get a lot of free time . . ."

"No, I'm afraid—"

"I feel awful ringing you up like this. You don't mind, do you? I mean, you're not angry, are you?"

"No."

"Well, I mean, the war has changed all that, hasn't it? People are so helpful now, don't you think? I mean, we are all anxious to help—even perfect strangers, don't you think?"

"No, I'm afraid not."

"This line is ghastly. I didn't catch that. Never mind, I mustn't keep you. I say, you don't want to rush away, do you? I mean, to dash on duty or something, do you?"

"No. But—"

"Jessie said you'd be most frightfully keen to help. If anyone could help, she said, you would. She told me how successful you are. Ambulance driving must be ghastly—I mean all these black-outs and things. But I suppose you don't get much driving lately, do you?"

"No."

"Or am I being awfully stupid or something? I mean is it ambulances you drive?"

"No."

"Of course, Jessie told me. It's canteens. I mean, it's organising. Jessie said you're wonderful. A terribly vital job. Of course I must seem just hopelessly stupid. I can't drive a car. I mean, I really can't. Do you think me awful? I mean, not being able to drive a car?"

"No."

"All the people who wear uniforms seem to drive something. I'm terribly keen on war work, and one feels one must do one's bit, and not being able to drive, one wonders. I mean, everybody seems to be driving something. Hello—

hello—I say, we're cut off . . . Hello—I say, were we cut off?"

"No."

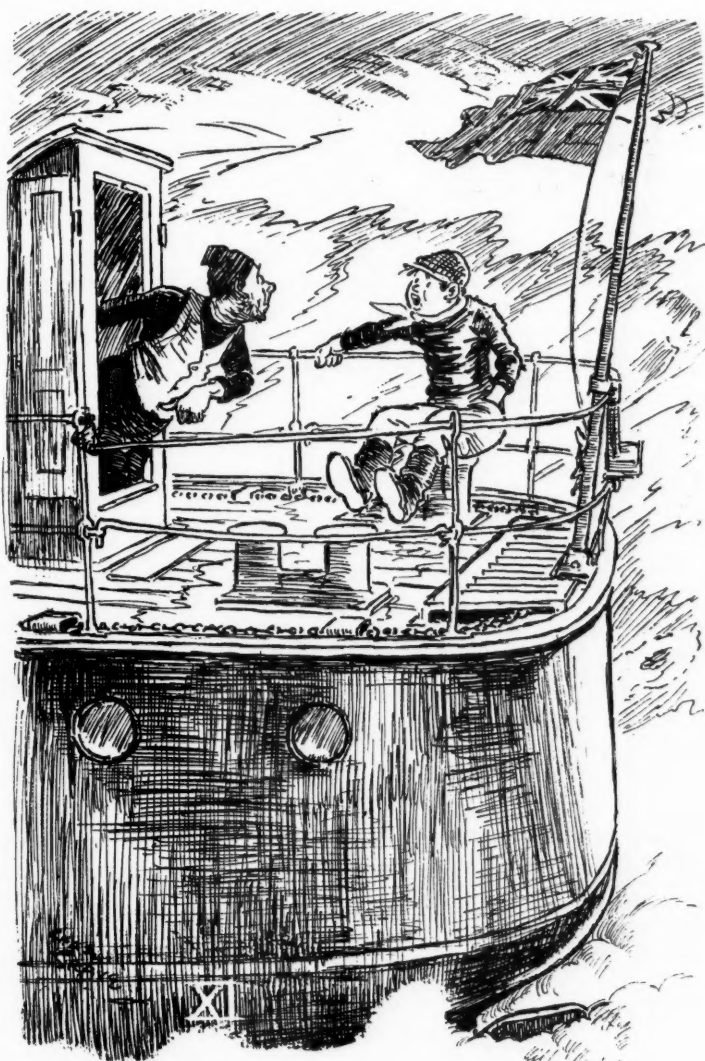
"When I asked Jessie about getting a paid job she said you are absolutely the person to help. I must be paid, I said. And, after all, some of them are getting five pounds a week and have huge private incomes. Jessie said I ought to have a job, really. I mean, it's a chance, isn't it, now there's a war. Organising, she said—I'm a born organiser. I always say 'I can organise anything.' Canteens. I mean van ones.

There's a need, I'm sure. I'd love to do that. Running them and all that. I'm terribly anxious to get a job, and Jessie said if anyone could wangle it, you could. She says you're quite marvellous—the amount you do, and all that! I say, do you think you can get me a job—organising, I mean? I know I could do that."

"No, I'm afraid not."

"I say, have I made a ghastly mistake? You are Trixie Windrush, aren't you—the Honourable Mrs. Windrush?"

"No, I'M AFRAID NOT."



"Safer below, is it? There's a bloke down there wiv flu coughin' an' sneezin' all over the place."



## At the Opera

"THE YEOMEN OF THE  
GUARD"  
(GOLDER'S GREEN  
HIPPODROME)

"VANDALISM!" hissed an old lady down the back of my neck.

"How dare they!" came a growl on my left in the tone you or I would use if we heard someone had bombed the Uffizi or put on a can-can show in the crypt of St. Paul's.

Such fevered resentment was aroused because the D'Oyly Carte Company have scrapped their old sets and dresses and have got Mr. PETER GOFFIN to design new ones.

Personally I think they have done very well. I have always felt there has been far too little arson in the store-rooms of opera companies. Light or heavy, opera is the bastard of the arts, and if its parentage is to be forgotten it needs all the help it can get from an attractive appearance; to go on clothing it according to the conventions of the past is only to emphasise its theatrical awkwardness and suggest it is too out of date to be capable of expression in current terms.

In the present case I'm afraid I should wade still further into sacrilege and use a respectful but firm blue pencil on some of GILBERT's dialogue. Not on his verse, of course; but it is only reasonable that operatic dialogue of over half a century ago should need spring-cleaning. *Dame Carruthers* in particular has some lines which by our standards are terrible unless they could be played as the wildest burlesque. "Tush in thy teeth, old man!" is a fair example. *Sir Richard Cholmondeley*, the Lieutenant of the Tower, may have seemed very splendid in the eighties, but he is now a pompous dullard. And even *Jack Point* himself, though I hesitate to say so, is hardly the wag he was. The last thing I wish to do is to attack so

great a craftsman as GILBERT; all I mean is that light verse wears much better than light prose.

Mr. GOFFIN's dresses are delightful,

his crowds in gentle tones and his leading actors in fine blazes of colour. There is only one set, apart from the short opening scene. The wall of the

Tower is suggested simply, there is a useful dais at the back of the stage and a single stylised tree juts up against a soft grey back-cloth. My 'neighbours' choleric complaints that such a tree was not to be found at the Tower seemed to me as fair as it would be to grumble, as one could, that this opera makes no less a person than the *Lieutenant of the Tower* talk about dragging a wide and heavily tidal river for a corpse, and contains about the longest hour known even to the resilient chronology of the stage.

But, Mr. GOFFIN praised, approval of this production must be tempered by the fact that many of the songs are indistinctly sung. GILBERT took immense pains to see that none of his effects was thrown away, but since his time the standard of diction on the British stage has steadily declined. It is a great pity whatever the play, but with light opera it is doubly lamentable. Only three members of this cast are as completely clear as they should be:

Mr. SYDNEY GRANVILLE, whose performance as the *Head Jailer* is the best work of the evening, Miss ELLA HALMAN as *Dame Carruthers* and Mr. JOHN DEAN as *Colonel Fairfax*.

*Elsie Maynard*, that extraordinarily unfeeling heroine, at least from the angle of *Jack Point*, is played by Miss HELEN ROBERTS, *Phabe* by Miss MARJORIE EYRE, *Point* by Mr. GRAHAME CLIFFORD and *Sergeant Meryll* by Mr. DARRELL FANCOURT.

These parts are all very competently taken, but D'Oyly Carte Companies of the past had an average of singing considerably higher.

The orchestra, under Mr. ISIDORE GODFREY, attended creditably to the SULLIVAN side of the evening. This season of repertory continues at Golder's Green until February 24th.

ERIC.



### A PAINLESS EXTRACTION

Wilfred Shadbolt . . . . . MR. SYDNEY GRANVILLE  
Phoebe Meryll . . . . . MISS MARJORIE EYRE  
Sergeant Meryll . . . . . MR. DARRELL FANCOURT



### "IT'S MANNERS OUT OF JOINT TO POINT"

W. S. Gilbert (all but)

Jack Point . . . . . MR. GRAHAME CLIFFORD  
Elsie Maynard . . . . . MISS HELEN ROBERTS  
Colonel Fairfax . . . . . MR. JOHN DEAN



## Spring Song

OR, RETORT COURTEOUS

"WHEN the crocus blossoms," hiss the women in Berlin,  
"HE will press the button, and the battle will begin.

When the crocus blossoms, up the German knights will go,  
And flame and fume and filthiness will terminate the foe."

"When the crocus blossoms and the flags of spring are flown  
We shall spray the fields with chloro-acetophenone;  
Lewisite and phosgene shall lay the English low,  
With one or two *disgusting* things of which they do not know."

"When the crocus blossoms, tanks and cannon in their teeth,  
Clouds of parachute-men will fall upon Blackheath;  
Troops of well-armed divers, who have walked the ocean bed,  
Will punctually land and shoot Herr Churchill through the head."

"When the crocus blossoms, winged torpedoes fill the air,  
By secret rays directed to the Bank and Leicester Square;  
German germs of this and that, as swift as German swords,  
Will liquidate the Cabinet and purge the House of Lords."

"When the crocus blossoms, down will go the British Fleet;  
Obedient German barnacles will through their bottoms eat.

Great black German searchlights will hide the English moon,  
And every little German child will suck a silver spoon."

"When the crocus blossoms, not a neutral will remain;  
All the happy Balkans will bless the Fuehrer's reign;  
And half the horrid English, repenting of their sin,  
Will soon, they say, be welcoming Gauleiter Goering in."

"When the crocus blossoms," hiss the women, "breaks the war."

But can it be that we have heard some hint of this before?  
When the first chrysanthemums were burning red and gold,  
Something very similar, I fancy, was foretold.

Still, when the cold world wakes again, and sings in sap and sod,

When the very rat salutes the noblest work of God,  
Herr Hitler and his chemists *may* send death to me and you—

For it's just the sort of silly thing that silly man would do.

A. P. H.



"And it's bit advertising pretty bad, too."

## Verb

ALL those who have the best interests of British prose at heart must have thrilled when they read a recent dispatch from the *Evening Standard's* Correspondent in Amsterdam. This short but eminently readable message was headed: SIX POLES IN WHITE SHEETS ESCAPE NAZIS. Prose-fanciers got (or should have got) their kick from the last sentence, which contained an entirely new war-time verb of motion. The last sentence read as follows:—

"For two days and three nights they [the six Poles] battled against snow, ice, and water, and beat the Gestapo trundling close behind them."

When I read these words I knew that one of Britain's loveliest heritages, her verbs of motion, was in safer hands than I had realised. Hitherto I had thought that the Gestapo, if they took their feet off the desk at all, invariably swooped, like other police forces. I had not thought of them as trundling, a mode of progression which makes them seem much more vivid, much more real. ("Trundle after them," snaps Himmler, "and shoot to kill." And off they go clanking in a cloud of steam, with an old man bearing a red flag to plod in front through the snow, the ice, and the water.)

Gradually we learn from the newspapers ever more about the enemy.

We know a good deal already; and much of that knowledge we owe to our splendid verbs of motion. We know, for instance, that enemy aircraft, when hit, "limp home" to Germany. When unsuccessfully engaged, they "turn tail and make off hastily." U-boats skulk or slink. German troops (when massing) lumber up. Russian troops, when they try to advance, are hurled forward; when they fail to advance, they are flung back. On the Western Front German machine-guns chatter, spit, or (at the best) cough; our own merely speak. German prices soar; ours rise.

But we are drifting away from verbs of motion into other departments of our fascinating war vocabulary. "Intense diplomatic activity"—see the frockcoats flying along the corridors, watch the Italian Chargé d'Affaires slide down the banisters, hear (with Our Diplomatic Correspondent) the authentic humming of the wires . . . NEW BEETROOT DRIVE . . . HOME FRONT CO-ORDINATION PLAN UNDER FIRE . . . POLICE SWOOP ON GLUE SHARKS . . .

If only, for once, they would trundle!

P. F.

## The Ordeal of a Market Gardener

MINE has been no easy life. From my earliest years a malignant destiny has dogged my footsteps, leaving no stone unturned which it could set up as a stumbling-block in my path, and exploring every avenue for cold water to throw upon my best-laid schemes. No period of my life perhaps affords a better illustration of this than the years I spent as a market gardener at Underminster round about the close of the last century.

Some people may say that for a person of my antecedents to become a market gardener at all was to court disaster. Certainly there was nothing horticultural about my upbringing. My father's family for generations back had been glass-blowers to a man; most of my mother's relations were professional water-diviners. Yet I have been told that when I was a child the sight of an exceptionally large cauliflower or beetroot would often make me burst into tears. Was it some ancestral memory, I wonder, that prompted such impulses? We shall never know.

At any rate when I read in the newspaper one morning that a market garden at Underminster was for sale with immediate possession I did not hesitate for a moment. Within a week the property had changed hands. On a frosty November morning I moved in, well pleased with my acre of rich earth-coloured soil and with the ivy-covered cottage which was to be my home. I commenced work immediately.

It has been said that he who makes two blades of grass grow where only one grew before is mankind's greatest benefactor. My own thoughts during those winter days went far beyond such modest ambitions. As I leaned on my spade in the middle of my plot, or rested for a few moments in the potting-shed, the future sometimes passed before my eyes as though in a vision. I saw, instead of one acre of bare earth, not two but fifty acres of waving corn. I saw new undreamed-of vegetables. Then, with a sigh, I returned to the world of reality. There was work to be done before all this could come to fruition. I leaned on my spade with a will.

One morning, while I was lost in one of these day-dreams, I suddenly heard a loud drawling voice behind me pronounce the words "Sandy subsoil!" I looked up sharply. My neighbour, a Mr. William Fosdick, was regarding me sardonically over the high paling which separated my plot from his. I had never seen him before, though I had heard much of him, for he had the reputation of being one of the foremost market gardeners in the district. He made a curious though imposing figure in shirt-sleeves and rimless glasses. He wore a hat made out of old gardening-gloves, and gardening-gloves made out of an old hat. But before I could ask what he meant by his remark he had vanished behind the paling, and I heard a sound of hoeing.

I ceased work earlier than usual that day with a vague sense of discouragement. Mr. Fosdick's remark, uttered perhaps thoughtlessly enough, had made me ill-at-ease.

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"These war-time batteries are so frightfully weak!"

For I had no idea what sandy subsoil was. Could I then be a good market gardener, I wondered? Could I ever hope to grow shallots or endives or broccoli if I were ignorant of such important matters?

Next morning, as I was beginning work, Mr. Fosdick looked over the paling again, eyeing me and my spade with a scornful practised eye. The knowledge that he was watching made me nervous. I began to dig desperately, and before I knew what I was doing I had dug up the foundations of the potting-shed. It collapsed in ruins about me. I had to spend the best part of the day in putting it together again. Mr. Fosdick was still watching when I had finished. I became nervous again, dug a deep pit and ended by falling into it.

That day was the beginning of my downfall. Once a gardener becomes self-conscious he is lost and his vegetables are lost with him. Day by day my self-consciousness grew, and with it my sense of failure. I knew somehow that I could never become as good a market gardener as Mr. Fosdick. I only knew the names of half a dozen vegetables in English; he knew the Latin names of every single vegetable in existence, for I had heard him recite them in a roaring voice before he got out of bed in the morning. I scarcely knew the difference between a rake and a turfing-iron; he, I have no doubt, could have told the difference at one glance. And at last whenever I heard the sound of his spade I laid mine aside with a sigh. I had no hope left. When the time for sowing came I sowed my seeds blindly, packets and all.

By degrees Mr. Fosdick became more friendly, after his own fashion. He would lean over the fence, shout out "Top dressing!" so loudly that it made me jump, and then become speechless with laughter at his own joke. Or he would tell interminable stories of the largest artichoke in the world, or of a tomato he had once grown which was so

heavy that it crushed six men to death. But these boastful tales made me envious and I shunned his company. Sometimes I would hastily improvise a trench to escape him and remain hidden in it till nightfall.

Spring came, and my plot, which should have been a mass of tight-packed vegetables, was a barren waste. I spent long hours leaning on my spade brooding on the dreary vista of my life. I thought enviously of Mr. Fosdick's garden and of how he was said to be able to grow any kind of vegetable anywhere. He had told me himself that he had once raised three hundredweight of potatoes in a harmonium. If only I could raise even one broad bean in a musical-box, I thought to myself, how happy I should be!

For a long time I could not bring myself to look at Mr. Fosdick's garden at all. The contrast between the abundance beyond the paling and the desolation on this side of it was too bitter. But at last curiosity got the better of me. I had not seen Mr. Fosdick for some days and hoped he was away. One summer morning I looked over the paling.

For some time I stared in stupefaction. There was not a vegetable to be seen. Only a couple of old hatstands relieved the desolate prospect. I was turning away in bewilderment when an exclamation made me look towards a cucumber-frame in the far corner of the garden. Lying full length in it was Mr. William Fosdick! It was obvious that he was trying to force himself. Even as I looked he waved his hand with a mad laugh.

And this was the man I had envied! The scales fell from my eyes and I saw him as he really was. My faith in the essential sanity of market gardening was rudely shaken. I began to ask myself whether, if this was all market gardening led to, it was worth going forward. And when, a week or so later, Mr. Fosdick beckoned to me and told me in a confidential whisper that he had just sown twelve rows of buttons and castors and was expecting a nice crop of secondhand overcoats and armchairs in the autumn, I had no heart left in me. By degrees I even gave up leaning on my spade in the middle of my plot. It was much simpler, I found, to lean on it in the potting-shed. After a time I dispensed with the spade altogether and leaned on a table. In the end I decided that I might just as well sit down. And I was not altogether sorry when a few months later the whole district was commandeered by the Underminster Town Council for a new tram terminus.



"Strictly between ourselves I've been involved in some rather tiresome litigation."



## Our Adjutant in France

**W**E flatter ourselves that during our months in France we have become used to unexpected and peremptory orders. But we were certainly shaken when the message arrived "Immediate. Urgent. Attacks by enemy Parachute Troops possible. Take all precautions." For with Heinkels, Junkers, and Messerschmitts we had already successfully coped, but we had never really taken parachute troops quite seriously. So there was naturally a bit of a flap on the Station, and everyone was rather excited, except, of course, that really great man, our Station Adjutant. He was neither surprised nor disconcerted. A runner was despatched to warn the Orderly Officer to load his revolver at once in all six chambers and to scan the heavens once every seven and a half minutes. Having thus scotched the immediate danger, our Adjutant then went into a deep huddle.

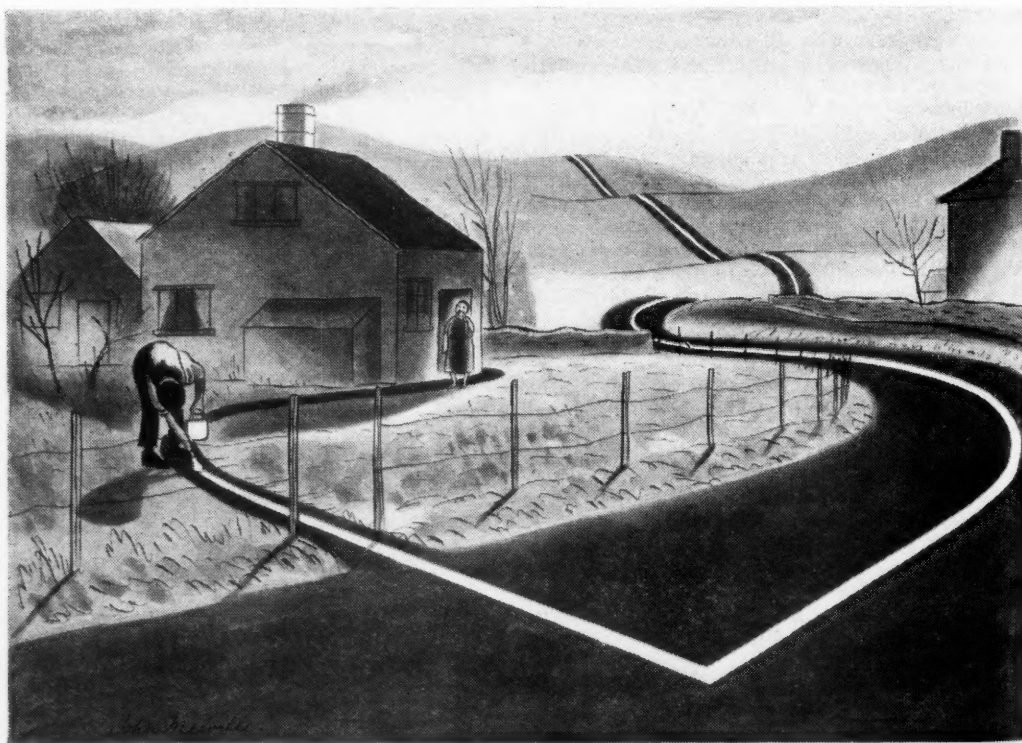
The results were immediate and formidable. The Station was soon

armed to the teeth. Piles of rifles and bayonets were stacked in every convenient corner, ready for snatching up at a moment's notice. Suspicious guards, finger on trigger, patrolled everywhere, and those unfortunate enough to be moving about after dusk could be heard loudly carolling "Good King Wenceslas," "South of the Border," and other unmistakable old English folk-ballads, hoping for the best. Comprehensive Battle Orders were issued. The studious inhabitants of our Operations Room were deeply depressed to learn that they were expected to hold their post to the death. All ciphers and secret files would be destroyed by fire or mastication. Our Cipher Officer, whose stove is always out, and who suffers appallingly from toothache, grew daily more dejected. And our Medical Officer reported with some relish that the Padre and half the men of the Station were suffering from chronic stiff neck, caused by constantly

scanning the skies for aerial landing parties.

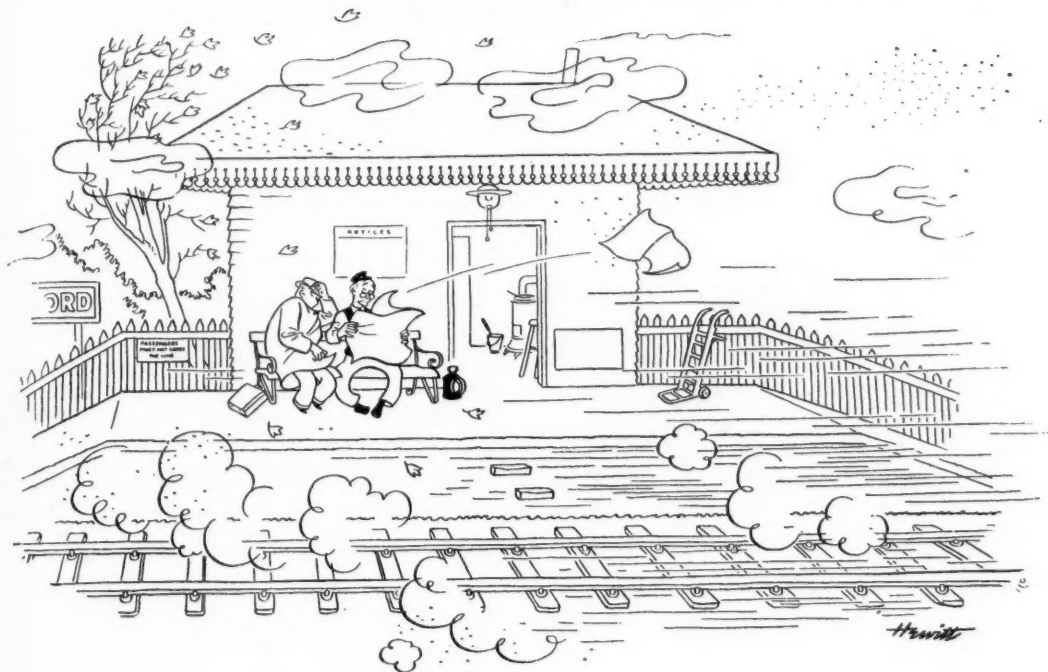
As he believes in doing a job thoroughly, our Adjutant's next step was to tackle the Army. But here he drew a blank. His modest request for the loan of a battalion of infantry and half a dozen light tanks met with such a blistering reply that he had to withdraw, blushing deeply. When suddenly the Idea struck him. The French had lots of troops. Why not try them!

Within half an hour he was through to the nearest French Army Command with a General de Division on the other end of the wire. Would the General pardon the occupation of his time by a mere Administration Officer of the English Army of the Air? The General graciously would. And had the General heard about the dastardly enemy's Troupes de Parachute? The General, he also, had heard about them. And had the General taken any measures of protection against these so formidable attackers? The General



"Dinner's ready, Sam."

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"There it goes—every day it's the racing page."

replied that he had certainly taken what he considered to be adequate measures. Then, since the English aviators were little skilled in the art of ground warfare wherein the French Army was undoubtedly of a genius incomparable, could the General of his great goodness include our Field of Aviation within his scheme of defence? Could he provide us with what he considered to be a really adequate guard against these invaders of the skies?

The General promptly replied that he could and would. And, beaming triumphantly, our Adjutant adjourned, to enjoy a well-earned drink and to receive our respectful congratulations.

After three days, however, there was still no sign of the promised French force. The Adjutant rang up again. *Tiens! Inexplicable!* The guard had been duly dispatched two days ago. Baffled for the moment, our Adjutant rang off and sallied forth to comb the Station. Nobody had seen a French force anywhere. Nobody had even heard of one. Questioning to and fro uneasily, he finally fetched up at the guard-room. Entering briskly to interrogate the sergeant of the guard,

he suddenly stopped, petrified. Before him, deeply engrossed in the difficult task of making an omelette over the guard-room fire, was an aged and decrepit French *réserviste*. In the corner lay his *palliasse* and blankets. Propped against the wall was his rifle bound with many bands of well-polished brass. It was an obviously authentic survival of the war of 1870. So, apparently, was its owner.

Making queer noises in his throat, our Adjutant approached the old man and touched him on the shoulder. The veteran turned, and succeeded in the difficult feat of making a respectful salute with one hand while carefully holding in the other a frying-pan containing his half-cooked omelette. On his breast were the faded ribbons of many long-forgotten campaigns. His name? *Père Goriot*, assuredly. This conveyed little to our Adjutant, who, in any case, is not a reader of *Balzac*, but prefers lighter (considerably lighter) French publications. And why was he there? Clearly prepared to be of every possible assistance, the old man patiently replied that he was there because his sergeant had sent him. Restraining himself with a mighty

effort, the Adjutant asked if he might be informed why the sergeant had sent him. Fumbling in his pocket the veteran produced a grimy slip of paper which he proceeded slowly to decipher. These, he explained patiently to our now fuming Adjutant, were his Orders—to report to the English Field of Aviation, to remain there until further orders and to protect it by day or night against any attack by the *sales Boches*. Which, said the old man with dignity, he was fully prepared to do. And, in the meantime, would *le Capitaine Anglais* excuse him, because, as he must know, there is a point in the preparation of an omelette when it cannot possibly be neglected if it is not to be spoiled irretrievably.

Our Adjutant tottered out. He has since been heard to say somewhat bitterly that the French are all right in their way, but that they have one bad fault: they don't take this war seriously enough.

#### Perambulator Ad Astra

"Two-day-old Recruits for the R.A.F."  
*"Evening Standard" caption.*



"Why people have to pile these dam' sandbags in front of their places, I can't imagine."

### Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

#### Germany in Collapse

IF Marshal HINDENBURG had been made to appear before Marshal FOCH and surrender his sword in person in November, 1918, the failure of the German General Staff would have been patent to the nation and all that followed might have been patent differently. This is the view of M. J. BENOIST-MÉCHIN, who, in the *History of the German Army since the Armistice* (SCIENTIA, Zürich, 10/6), declares that the corps of officers, skilfully contriving to pass to others the burden of defeat, alone maintained a traditional rigidity through the epoch of blood-stained plastic chaos that brought forth the ill-fated German republic. This great first volume, covering a period of only a few long months, is much more than a military history. It describes with fire and knowledge the brutal suppression by the dominant caste of the recurrent ill-directed movements for real freedom, the incredulous refusal to accept that in very fact even intolerant Prussia had been overthrown, the immediate progress in rebuilding a great army even with the Allies on the Rhine, and finally the horror-stricken reaction to the stringent military clauses of Versailles. Behind all the positive action of soldiers and politicians the dumb people, caring nothing for Monarchist or Republican or Spartakist, but asking only to be left to forget their hunger

and live their human lives, were driven, even as to-day, like sheep through an open gate along the road to eventual new destruction.

#### Hope Springs Eternal

A story with a magnificent beginning and end, that says a little in the middle, *The Day Before* (HEINEMANN, 9/-) is Mr. H. M. TOMLINSON's prelude to Sarajevo. With the sinking of the *Titanic* and the first shot of the last war, the novel closes. It opens on the packing-floor of a Cheapside warehouse, where Clem Venner, one of the subsidiary helots of our export trade, is seen in the act of becoming fed up. Failing to distinguish between Colon and Colombo, he is fired; and a sojourn under the useless and lovely dome of Paul's, plus a meeting with a daft or inspired tramp, sends him off to Cornwall with a haversack and an open mind. His subsequent encounter with a live wire in journalism lures him into that vivacious orbit; and though Fleet Street lacks the values that "relate facts to each other and to us," he does contrive—notably during a transport strike—to serve a purpose greater than himself. A murder, stolen documents and a mysterious siren litter the surface of the book; but it will be read for its values rather than its facts and for the style that so exquisitely presents both.

#### Poet's Garner

Compiled to please herself and published for the delight of a wider public, *Edith Sitwell's Anthology* (GOLLANCZ, 7/6) holds for its readers all that heightening of personal enthusiasm which comes from comparing notes and concurring, or quarrelling, with an expert. Here are close on six hundred pages of English verse from CHAUCER onwards—no living poets are represented—and fifty or so of French. The choice is determined (on the credit side) by Miss SITWELL's supreme sense of the value of rhythm, as derived from structure and texture, and (on the debit side) by her lack of the inward eye of visual imagination and by a defective sense of humour. These shortcomings, which can be gathered from her long and fascinating critical notes



"Well, at certain times it will only get symphony concerts."

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Awe-struck Tommy (from the trenches), "LOOK, BILL—SOLDIERS!"

J. H. Dowd, February 14th, 1917

even more clearly than from her choice of verses, make her none the worse showman of all the beauty she can and does perceive. They do, however, render her liable to a rather feminine pettishness with poetry she does not understand—MATTHEW ARNOLD's, for instance—and a rather unfeminine coarseness of palate which includes certain passages of WALT WHITMAN that the exercise of either a sensitive imagination or a flair for the ridiculous would have excluded.

#### Southern Journey

No doubt a good many readers of Mr. A. F. TSCHIFFELY's earlier adventures will be disappointed to find that in the journey described under the title *This Way Southward* (HEINEMANN, 15/-) he has for the most abandoned the horse for horse-power provided by Mr. FORD, and that those

two redoubtable companions, MANCHA and GATO, make but a brief appearance, and that a passive one. Nevertheless, his narrative is as vivid and picturesque as ever (in which respects, as in certain others, the author reminds one very forcibly of another famous traveller and Hispanophile, GEORGE BORROW) and his descriptions of the pampas are full of the fascination of those wide inland seas of grass which are so characteristic of both the Americas—treeless, desolate, sometimes arid, upon which great flocks and herds move like clouds in a sky grown solid. Like BORROW, too, Mr. TSCHIFFELY has the gift of making friends with all sorts of odd people he meets on his travels, and he is perhaps at his happiest when he is dealing with the queer and unexpected characters, dead and alive, in whom the South American continent seems to be especially rich; among them Mr. NORRIS of Manchester, a colony of Spanish-



speaking Welshmen in Patagonia, the comic opera King ORLLIE ANTOINE of Araucania, and a forgotten Fuegian Hitler, JULIUS POPPER. The photographs of sea, mountain and plain, of which there are very many, are a noteworthy feature of the book.

### Provincial Comedy

Readers who want a straightforward story with plenty of action, told in simple language, should avoid Mr. SHERARD VINES' novel, *Green to Amber* (CAPE, 8/3); but anyone alive to those subtle social differences, and those even more subtle differences of mood, that so seldom get successfully described in fiction, will find it extremely entertaining. The story itself is not out of the ordinary: a number of inter-connected love affairs, the scene mostly in and around the big provincial town of Rumpingham; but the style—extraordinarily allusive, compressed, lively and varied—beautifully catches and conveys, often with astonishing brevity, effects that most people might have thought incapable of expression. The book is not for a careless, lazy or dull-witted reader, who would very quickly get confused among the many characters. It is full of amusement and, for that matter, instruction, for all who care to look for them; and any writer should find that it repays study.

### The Hundred Best Thoughts

A man is known by the company he keeps, and as most men spend more time in the company of their own thoughts than in any other, these thoughts should be illuminating and instructive. Something like this Mr. EDEN PHILLPOTTS might have written in his *Mixed Grill* (WATTS, 5/-), under the heading perhaps of "Meditation." The "mixed grill" is the outcome of a suggestion from its author's wife, who advised him, as a preventive for mental pottering, to "think more about subjects that matter" and to set down his thoughts regularly, one thought a day. This programme Mr. PHILLPOTTS carried out dutifully for one hundred days—and here are the results, which he modestly calls "one hundred memoranda from a commonplace intelligence and memory proceeding on commonplace lines." The "memoranda" are as varied as they are brief, ricocheting from Relativity and Horticulture to Glands and Egocentrics and Ideologies; from EURIPIDES and SCHOPENHAUER to BARNUM, JAMES WATT, IRVING and W. G. GRACE; from EINSTEIN, PETER THE GREAT, ZENO and OMAR KHAYYAM to MALTHUS, MARTIN TUPPER and NICHOLAS UDALL of Eton. Nothing very new is said about any of these, and on such major themes as Selfishness, Tolerance, Religion or Genius we come perilously near to platitude; so that one reader at least would have preferred further examples from

that rich Devonian storehouse the author has at his command. It is easy to enjoy, however, the man who envisaged hell as a place "crammed full of pets"; and also the little Hitler-Mussolini story. Perhaps we need not go beyond the grill's inspirer for a summing-up—"Just a sort of a bedside book to help people go to sleep." Gentle ruminations recapitulating rather than exploring; what oft was thought and is none the worse for being once more well expressed.

### A Watchful Maître d'Hôtel

The ten stories included in *The Milan Grill Room* (HODDER AND STOUGHTON, 4/-) are clearly stamped with the E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM brand, which is as much as to say that they provide light and readable entertainment. Their sub-title is "Further Adventures of Louis, the Manager, and Major Lyson, the Raconteur," and while giving accounts of the queer people who from time to time came

under the observant eye of Louis, Mr. OPPENHEIM does not forget that the main reason for visiting a restaurant is to eat and drink. These tales are not perhaps very original, but one or two of them—"The Man in the Grey Suede Gloves" and "A Broken Sabbath," for example—deserve an especial word of recognition.



"Look here, Major, don't you realise that there's a war on?"

### Nosey Parkers

Mr. MILES BURTON is a workmanlike teller of detective stories, and in *Murder in the Coal Hole* (COLLINS, 8/3) he once again produces a perplexing problem. A manager of Middleden Elementary School continually set the village agog with his interferences, but although it was easy to think that such a quarrelsome man asked for trouble it was difficult to guess by whom he was so fatally and finally punished. So that well-known couple, *Inspector Arnold* of Scotland Yard and his friend *Desmond Merriem*, soon arrived on the scene, and as usual the official detective's stupidity was emphasised by *Merriem's* profound sagacity. But Mr. BURTON must deal more gently with the *Inspector* or he will become too inept to be credible.

### Winter Sky

THIS sky not matched by morning, not by summer  
Of periwinkle depths unstirred, unstarred—  
No wind must spoil this sky, no star make dimmer  
The radiance winter spared.

Above bare boughs and roof-tops clouds uncover  
That eggshell clarity dappled by no breath,  
And the little lazy clouds go rosily over;  
And out of them spins death.

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